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## **Naxalism Today**

**Prakash Karat**

IT is nearly two decades since the phenomenon popularly known as naxalism manifested itself on the Indian political scene. What is the state of naxalism today? What has happened to the ideology and politics of the groups, which comprised the naxalite movement? An answer to these questions for the recent period will be instructive, as it confirms the time-lessted experience of the international communist movement that left – sectarianism and ultra-left adventurism is the observe of right-reformism and revisionism and ends up serving the interests of the ruling classes. Ultra – leftism of any variety of which naxalism is type, contains within itself the seeds of disruption and self-destruction.

It is well known that the naxalite movement disintegrated into myriad groups and factions in the early seventies within five years of its birth. Along with this organizational disintegration, and preceding it, was the ideological disarray and confusion. In this article, the focus is on the ideological deadend these groups have reached, which is the basis for the continuing derailment of the left-adventurist stream. After continuously grappling with the ideologically bankrupt positions taken at the outset, the naxalite groups are nowhere near resolving the problems, which began when they abandoned their Marxist-Leninist moorings. Every theoretical and political issue, which confronts them, leads of further ideological confusion and consequent organisational splintering. Despite their decade-long struggle to “reorient and rectify” their positions none of these groups have come anywhere near correcting their dogmatic errors. On the other hand, these groups have further degenerated into anti-left anarchic groups subject to the worst forms of petty-bourgeois deviations.

The purpose in this article is not give an historical account of the theory and practice of these groups since the disintegration began in the early seventies. The emphasis is on analyzing their ideological and theoretical positions and the inner contradictions and conflicts between the groups, based on their own documents and publications.

Without understanding their current positions on ideological questions, the splintering and kaleidoscope merging and splitting of the groups cannot be comprehended. The analysis also shows how the naxalities have had to abandon most of the basic positions adopted by them when they challenged the CPI(M)'s ideological-programmatic-tactical line in 1967-68. Where they have persisted in clinging to some of the original positions, they have landed themselves in irreconcilable contradictions between their theory and practice.

Finally, the article points out that despite the failure of the ultra-left challenge in the ideological sphere, the left-opportunism pursued by these groups is dangerous for the left movement. Despite the political-organisational splintering of naxalism, the potential for mischief by ultra-leftism in new forms remains along with the necessity to continuously fight against petty-bourgeois revolutionism, which finds fertile soil in India due to the crisis and the impact of bourgeois-landlord rule.

### **The Current State of Naxalism**

The much publicized claim of the naxalities that the CPI(ML), launched in 1969, heralded the new revolutionary party, collapsed in shambles in 1971-72. Even before this the movement had begun to splinter. A brief recounting of the organizational disintegration is necessary to get a full picture of the state of the naxalite groups today.

Even before the announcement of the formation of the CPI(ML) in 1969, the splintering had begun. In 1968 when the various naxalite groups which split away from the CPI(M) formed the All India Coordination Committee of communist Revolutionaries (AICCR), two groups broke away that year itself in West Bengal-the Parimal Dasgupta and Asit Sen groups. The latter formed the Maoist Coordination Centre. This was followed by the AICCR led by charu Mazumdar disaffiliating the Andhra group led by Nagi Reddy, DV Rao and Pulla Reddy. In 1969, the following groups also disassociated from the Charu Mazumdar-led naxalites-the BB Chakraborty group which is known currently as the Liberation Front, the Moni Guha group, and the Kunnikal Narayanan group in Kerala which maintained a distinct identity.

In September, 1970 a few months after the 'First Congress' of the CPI(ML) which elected Charu Mazumdar as its General Secretary, the faction led by Satyanarian Singh revolted and in 1971 formed their own CPI(ML) Central Committee. In 1971, Ashim Chatterjee, Santosh Rana and other split away from the Charuite group. While the SNS group opposed the line of individual annihilation pursued by the Charu-led party the Ashim Chatterjee group also opposed the CPI (ML) of opposing the liberation struggle in Bangladesh.

In 1972, after Mazumdar's death, the Charuite committee was led by Sharma and Mahadev Mukherjee and during this time, the CPI (ML) totally disintegrated. From this point onwards, the CPI (ML) Central Committee, which succeeded Charu Mazumdar no longer represented the mainstream of the naxalite movement. The Khokan Mazumdar group in West Bengal, the Saraf group in Jammu and Kashmir, the Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Kerala factions all began to function independently without any coordination.

The CPI (ML) charuite group split two with Mahadev Mukherjee expelling Sharma. The Mahadev Mukherjee group itself split into two-the anti-Lin Biao and pro-Lin Biao groups. The anti-Lin Biao group which was also pro-Charuite, based in Bhojpur district, Bihar, later evolved into the CPI (ML) led by Vinod Mishra. The pro-Lin Biao group led by Mukherjee saw him ousted from leadership and after the emergency the group was led by Nishit Banerjee and Azisul Haq, and is based in West Bengal.

Meanwhile, Sharma who had parted ways with Mukherjee, along with the Suniti Ghosh group, the Andhra Committee and some others formed the central Organising Committee (COC) in 1974. However, this unity did not last long. The October 1975 resolution "Road to Liberation" was a compromise one which soon led to new disagreements. In 1976, the Andhra Committee split away. This was followed by the COC breaking up with the groups parting ways. The northern India group for sometime formed the Communist League of India but later became defunct.

Among the major pro-Charu groups existing today, apart from the Vinod Mishra group, there is the People's War group led by Kondapalli Seetharamiah in Andhra Pradesh. This group originated in the Andhra Committee, which split away from the COC in 1976. From this committee the Kondapali group combined with the

Kothandaraman pro-Charu group of Tamilnadu and formed the CPI (ML) People's War group in 1980. They decided to persist in armed struggle while also working in mass organisations.

Another pro-Charu group existing today is the Central Reorganising Committee (CRC) led by Venu. A section of the Kerala pro-Charu naxalites and a splinter group from Andhra formed this group in 1979. This group also defends the Charuite line while accepting the need for mass work.

Among the anti-Charu Mazumdar groups also a process of splits and realignments has been going on. In Andhra the naxalites who from the beginning refused to accept the CPI (ML) understanding and tactics, were led by Nagi Reddy, Pulla Reddy and DV Rao. This group split into two in 1971 with Pulla Reddy forming his own group. After the death of Nagi Reddy in 1976, DV Rao assumed the leadership of this group in Andhra. In 1975 the Negi Reddy group had joined with the Moni Guha group of West Bengal and the North Zone unity center to form the UCCRI (ML). In 1976, they divided again with Moni Guha and DV Rao expelling each other from the organizations, and resumed separate functioning. The DV Rao-led UCCRI also underwent various splits.

In the meantime, the other major anti-Charu stream led by SN Singh had been joined in 1977 by the Unity committee comprising the Khokan Manzumdar (N Bengal) and Vaskar Nandy groups. They constituted the Central committee led by SN Singh. In 1975, the Chandra Pulla Reddy group from Andhra united with the SNS group and they formed from West Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab revolted from the SN Singh group and formed what is known as the Central Team. The SNS-Pulla Reddy group which became a major group in the Naxalite movement broke up in 1980 with the Pulla Reddy group walking off and resuming independent functioning.

Another formation of naxalite groups, which opposed the Charuite line originated with the leaders lodged in the Vizag jail. Kanu Sanyal, the erstwhile lieutenant of Charu Mazumdar, took the initiative to form the Organising Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (OCCR). Nagabhusanam Patnaik also out of jail, formed his own group. Both these leaders have been trying without success to forge some unity among the warring groups.

Moni Guha after the debacle of the UCCRI, has been advocating the pro-Albanian line and is considered anathema by other groups. The only the rpro-Albanian faction is the Ghadar Party which is Punjab. The Saraf group ploughed a lonely furrow and after being decimated in Jammu and Kashmir has formed its own party titled the 'Proletariat Party.'

From the above maze of splits and realignments, it can be said that the major groups, which have not become defunct are: *Pro-Charu groups*; 1. CPI (ML)-Vinod Mishra group 2. CPI(ML)-People's War group 3. CPI(ML)-CRC(Venu group) 4. CPI(ML) Second Central Committee groups (Pro Lin Biao)

*Anti-Charuite groups*: 1. CPI(ML)-SN Singh group 2. CPI(ML)-C. Pulla Reddy group 3. CPI(ML)-COC groups 4. OCCR (Kanu Sanyal) 5. UCCRI (ML)-(Nagi Reddy DV Rao) 6. Maoist Communist Center 7. Liberation Front 8. CPI(ML)-Central Team.

Apart from these, there are minor ones which still maintain some existence such as: 1. Shanti Pal group (West Bengal) 2. Kunnikal Narayanan group (Kerala) 3. B P Sharma group (Rajasthan, UP) 4. Chelapati Rao group (AP) 5. Tamil Nadu splinters AOC and SOC 6. Ghadar party 7. Proletariat Party-Saraf group 8. Revolutionary Communist Party (Punjab)

However, it must be remembered that the situation is not static. The above groups constantly divide and re-form. For instance in 1984, splits have occurred in the major groups of SN Singh and Chandra Pulla Reddy committees. In the S N Singh-led group before his death in September 1984, a serious split developed between the S N Singh-led minority in the PCC, and the majority led by Vaskar Nandy and Santosh Rana leading to the formation of parallel committees. Similarly in the Pulla Reddy led group also a split occurred a few months before his death with a faction led by Palia Vasudeva Rao Splitting off. The political-ideological bases for these splits are being dealt with in a later section.

### **Futile Quest For Unity**

Alongside the endless splintering of the groups, an equally endless but futile for unity has also been going on. The earliest move was in

March 1975 when the SNS group united with the Pulla Reddy group and formed the Provisional Central Committee of the CPI (ML). This broke up in 1980 because of sharp differences between the two groups on the question of united front tactics at the international and national levels against 'social imperialism' and 'Indian fascism'. During the emergency in 1975 the SNS-Pulla Reddy group had initiated a meeting with the COC the unity Committee and the UCCRI and a joint declaration was issued for the formation of an 'anti-fascist united front'. However, soon after the COC and UCCRI denounced the declaration and the move failed. This was allowed, as stated, with the COC itself breaking up into four groups.

In 1979, the Vinod-Mishra group and the SN Singh-Pulla Reddy group issued a joint statement and agreed to take up joint activities. But quarrels, in December 1981, Nagabhushanam Patnaik and other took the initiative to call a meet in which 13 groups attended. This meet also ended in mutual recriminations and the unity effort ended in a fiasco. In April 1982, a conference was held in Delhi initiated by the Vinod Mishra group, which the Pulla Reddy, Nagabhushanam Patnaik groups and others attended. The conference sought to achieve organizational coordination and to build up a 'national alternative'. The Conference announced the formation of an Indian People's Front (IPF). Predictably the front and its concept of national alternative came in for bitter attack from the SN Singh group, CRC Saraf, and others. The SNS group sarcastically commented, "NO sane political creature believes that any single political party can emerge as the National Alternative to Indira fascism right now... Recently one group and its supporters held a national conference in Delhi and formed the Indian People's Front... Utopian dreams based on exaggerated self-esteem is a disease that drives a victim to commit suicide. So the Indian People's Front led by one revolutionary group has become the National Alternative!" (For a new democracy, May Day, 1982)

The failure to unite is not surprising given their ideological difference and inability to come to any common assessments regarding the past theories and practice of naxalism. There are some groups like the Vinod Mishra group, CRC and People's War group which refuse to renounce the Charu Mazumdar line and defend his basic positions with some minor criticisms. On the other hand the SNS-led group, UCCRI and Pulla Reddy groups consider the Charu line disastrous and responsible for the debacle of naxalism. Some like the OCCR and Nagabhushanam Patnaik group are attempting organizational coordination unity, skirting these divisive

issues and hoping for unity through united work and struggle.

The obstacle to unity is not only on pro and anti-Charuite lines. Within these two broad camps, there are innumerable difference on the content of Mao Zedong thought, attitude to the Chinese Communist Party application of the three world theory, participation in parliamentary activities, individual annihilation and armed struggle tactics and the concept of mass work and mass organizations. It is necessary therefore, to look at the ideological and political controversies which hold these groups in a barren and vice-like grip.

### **Ideological Disarray**

In 1968, when the naxalite left-adventurist deviation challenged the CPI(M)'s Marxist-Leninist-based stand on ideological and programmatic issues, they put up a left-sectarian position on a whole range of question pertaining to the international communist movement and the path of the Indian revolution. The naxalite condemned the CPI(M) as 'neo-revisionists' on the question of the character of the Indian state, stage of the revolution, strategy tactics, assessment of the Soviet Union and the international correlation of class forces.

Their stand then could be summed up as follows: India is not politically independent it is semi-colonial, semi-colonial, semi-feudal; the Indian state is controlled by imperialists, compradore bureaucratic capital and feudal landlords, the stage of revolution is national liberation against imperialism, compradore capitalism and feudalism; people's war based on armed struggle of the peasantry is the tactical line for liberation; the Soviet Union is revisionist (later modified to social imperialist) which is collaborating with US imperialism; adherence to Mao Zedong thought is the test of a communist party. They condemned participation in parliament as reformist and adopted boycott as a strategic slogan; they denied the role of mass organizations and abandoned trade unions as reformist organizations, further in the sphere of tactics, they negated the role of united fronts, branding them as class collaborationist.

The CPI(M), countering the left-adventurist positions, has stated: "If we take all the arguments of the critics of the ideological document

what do they amount to? They amount to a total repudiation of the understanding of the epoch. They imply liquidation of the socialist camp; they convey that capitalism has been restored in the USSR leading to imperialist policies; that the major fight of the working class of the world is not against American imperialism but against Soviet and American imperialism. The fight against the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union is replaced by the fight against the “imperialism” of the Soviet State.” (Ideological Debate Summed Up by Polit Bureau, p.173)

This was the package of left-infantilism which characterized the various naxalite groups who challenged the revolutionary credentials of the CPI(M). Today after nearly two decades of naxalite activity, when we assess where this platform has taken them, it is clear that they have been forced to abandon most of these position. In fact they have retreated pell-mell from the ‘revolutionary’ platform they adopted. Where they cling to such positions their own makes it difficult to reconcile it with the theories they espouse. Let us look some of these key positions and their derailment.

### **Mao Zedong Thought and-Attitude to CPC**

The distinctive characteristic of the naxalite groups since their inception has been their advertised allegiance to Mao Zedong thought was the essence of Marxism-Leninism of our epoch. Except for the pro-Albanina groups who were denounced Mao Zedong thought, all our groups extant continue to swear allegiance. However, their perceptions of its content and role differ and each accuses the other of distorting or revising Maoist ideology. The pro-Charu groups, except the Vinod Mishra group, continue to hail the Revolution and refuse to accept the CPC’s critical revaluation of this period and the damage it cause the party and socialist construction. The whole gamut of left-sectarian positions on the international situation and building of socialism is considered by these groups to be the main content of Mao Zedong thought. On the other hand the SN Singh, C Pulla Reddy and DV Rao groups accept the CPC evaluation as presented in the eleventh congress and the sixth plenum of the C C and the denunciation of the gang of four. The pro-Charu People’s War group, after initially accepting the CPC positions, has now come round to considering them revisionist. The CPC’s own assessment of some of the erroneous concepts upheld by the party under Mao’s leadership is not acceptable to the CRC, People’s War and Saraf groups. These groups now maintain that the

CPC has become a revisionist party. At the extreme, the pro-Lin Biao group has taken the absurd stand that China has become a social imperialist power.

From the naxalite groups who held that China was the center of the world revolution, a substantial number now have gone over to the position that the CPC has betrayed world revolution. The CPC's authoritative documents produced in the sixth plenum of the CC, the eleventh and twelfth congresses, have become for them the bedrock of revisionism and betrayal of Mao Zedong thought. The blind and dogmatic adherence to Mao Zedong thought as the essence of Marxism-Leninism of the epoch- a position which the CPC itself does not maintain now-is the key to the ideological disarray these groups have reached.

### **Three World Theory**

Another important aspect of the differences between the groups on the content of Mao thought concerns the Three world Theory. Some of the bitterest polemics are directed as to whether it forms an integral part of Mao Zedong thought or not. Most of the groups whether anti-Charu or pro-Charu, the SNS group, the Pulla Reddy group, the Vinod Mishra group. D V Rao, etc., uphold the Three World Theory as a component part of Mao Zedong thought and creative application of Marxism Leninism. It is on this basis that they work out their political line on international and national questions. The CPI(M) had in 1947 itself, when this theory was put out by the CPC, criticized it as anti-Marxist not being based on class analysis. The division of the world into three- the first world of the two superpowers; the second world of other imperialist countries and the third world of the underdeveloped countries-went against the basic analysis of class relations in the international sphere and eliminated the central contradiction between imperialist system and the socialist system. Now, some of the naxalite groups like the CRC (Venu group). Saraf group (and of course the pro-Albanian splinters) have launched a bitter attack on the Three World Theory.

They argue that no such theory was formulated by Mao Zedong and such a bogus theory has been smuggled in by the 'revisionist clique' headed by Deng Xiaoping. In order to defend their version of Mao thought, they argue that Mao had only talked of differentiating the

three worlds for purposes of foreign policy tactics and had never elaborated and elevated the three worlds into a full-fledged theory. Exposing the groups who uphold this thesis, they point out that this theory has led to the formulation that out of the two super-powers, the Soviet Union's social imperialism is more aggressive and dangerous. This has led to these groups becoming soft on US imperialism and ending up allying with US imperialist forces and the parties that represent them in India. For instance the CRC group states, "Opportunists like Satyanarain Singh in India advanced the thesis of building a united front with pro-American ruling classes. The Three World Theory' has come as a born to these opportunists who were already well ahead on this path of collaborating with the pro-US section of the ruling classes" (K Venu: Mao Zedong and Three World Theory' p. 29)

Further, it exposes the international implications of this line while talking about ASEAN. Three World Theories shows great enthusiasm in holding up this organization as united front against Soviet social imperialism and as one of the factors conducive to the building of a broad front of the third world countries. In reality however this organization has been formed, with the full backing and blessings of US imperialism by the imperialist lackeys the compradore feudal states of Philippines Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore with the objective of chalking out schemes for suppressing the people's revolutionary struggles." (Venu: Mao Zedong and Three World Theory' p. 32)

But the CRC naxalite group's fierce denunciation of the Three World Theory is only partial, as they do not dispute the existence of two super-powers and Soviet social imperialism. Their only difference is that the Soviet Union should not as a general principle be considered the more aggressive imperialist power. Both the 'imperialisms' are dangerous and which is more dangerous will depend on country and situation to situation. As an illustration, according to them, US imperialism is more dangerous in Latin America, while the Soviet Union poses a greater threat in Afghanistan and Kampuchea.

Even in the interpretation of the Three World Theory there are differences between those who uphold it, on how to implement it. For instance the People's War group interprets it in a different way from the SN Singh group. on building united fronts based on this theory also the SN Singh and Pulla Reddy groups got divided. In 1980 the unity of these two groups was disrupted on the question of building

an anti-Soviet front on the basis of the Soviet Union being the main enemy of the Indian people and the necessity of forgoing a united front against Indira fascism by including even pro-US allies. After the split the SNS-led group claimed: "it was our party which initiated and forged a broad united front against Russian aggression on Afghanistan, and united Gandhites and Royists, Socialists and Sarvodayites. BJP and the Moslem League on the same platform to oppose hegemonism and aggression." (*For a New Democracy*, March-April, 1982)

The crux of the matter lies in the fact that the various naxalite groups are forced to stick to the erroneous ideological positions put out by the CPC during the left-sectarian phase of the cultural revolution. To justify their existence, with all their dogmatic position being rejected by life and experience, leads them to cling to those very concepts which even the CPC has critically abandoned.

### **Strategy & Programme: Disorientation**

Given their distorted loyalty to a dogmatic 'Mao Zedong thought' it is but natural that in the sphere of strategy and programmatic formulations these groups show the same variety of left opportunism, sectarianism and hopeless confusion. In recent years, particularly after the emergency was lifted, most of the groups have been undertaking the exercise of holding 'party' congresses and 'special conferences' preparing draft programme and resorting to interminable discussions within their groups and amongst the different groups. The SNS group held its party congress in 1982 and prepared a programme; the Vinod Mishra group held a party congress in January 1983; the CRC group held a party conference in January 1982; the Andhra groups have also held a series of conferences; the Saraf group held a party congress with 14 delegates and formed a Proletariat Party in 1983. simultaneously all the groups have been analyzing each other's efforts and subjecting them to bitter polemics, and at times abuse.

In 1970, the CPI(ML)-led by Charu Mazumdar had adopted its programme by which India was termed semi-colonial and semi-feudal. The state was characterized as imperialist-compradore bureaucratic capitalist and feudal. The stage of the revolution was national liberation and the principle contradiction had been termed as that between feudalism and the broad masses of the people. In

reassessing the programmatic formulations and tasks, sharp differences have arisen. The Andhra group which did not join the CPI(ML) in 1969 continues to differ from the 1970 propositions. According to DV Rao of the UCCRI group, India is a neo-colony, which is exploited by both superpowers India is not a semi-colony and had achieved political independence in 1947. It lost its independent status and became a neo-colony of the superpowers. As for the compradore bourgeoisie, he has his own peculiar interpretation. He states that there is a compradore class in the industrial bourgeoisies; the compradore class is part of the Indian bourgeoisie, thereby recognizing that there are sections of the bourgeoisie, which are not compradore. Then he goes on to further confuse the issue by stating, "Compradore bourgeoisie class means a bourgeoisie class having a compradore character, not a mere commission agent." (DV Rao: *People's Democratic Revolution in India*, p. 24)

While most groups pay lip service to the principle contradiction being between feudalism and the Indian people, Saraf violently disagrees. According to him the principle contradiction should be termed as that between the *alliance* of imperialism, the compradore bourgeoisie and feudalism on the one hand, and the Indian people on the other. He inveighs against the other groups for not understanding the key role of *alliance* of these forces in state power. (A Revolutionary view point, Jan-March 1978, Saraf p. 83)

J P Dixit who runs his own journal (*People's Power*) pounces on the alliance theory and attacks: "a suggestion of alliance between the native classes and imperialism means an end of the economic and political subjugation of imperialism.... The theory is dangerous as it supports the imperialist fraud that their lackeys are not lackeys but their friends and allies." (*People's Power*, Jan -June 1982, p.5) The S N Singh group is also subjected to this attack as in their draft programme they amended the principle contradiction on the lines of the alliance of imperialism, compradore bourgeoisies and feudalism.

Not content with this attempt to stretch all logic and credulity to maintain the semblance of a lackey bourgeoisie in the state power, the CRC (Venu) group has also made its creative contribution. "We have to recognize that class relations are undergoing change in differing degrees and that new classes like the rural bourgeoisie and the local bourgeoisie in the industrial sector are emerging. If the observations are proved correct we will have to make substantial

changes in the programme. The character of the New Democratic Revolution will remain to be anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, but the emphasis will shift on to the anti imperialist aspect. The main target of attack be both the imperialist blocs and their Indian allies, the bureaucratic compradore bourgeoisie.”(Mass Line, May 1984, Interview with Venu)

Like a specter, the original sin committed in the 1970 programme continues to haunt them and there seems to be nothing available to put them out of their endless misery of interminable and divisive discussions. The CRC group is still formulating the new CPI(M) programme and it seems to be a protracted affair. This group and some others including the recently formed Nandy-Santosh Rana faction of the SNS-CPI(ML), are unable to reconcile the evidence of capitalist development with a semi-colony/semi-feudal model. The escape route sought by the CRC group to maintain the fiction is to bring about the theory of imperialist-sponsored ‘capitalist development’ in India, plagiarizing the Gunder-Frank/Samir amin theories. The other attempt as by DV Rao is to term India a neo-colony. Yet some others, like the Santosh Rana-Vaskar Nandy faction’s special congress held in 1984, attempts to state that imperialism is directly sharing power in the Indian state as opposed to the rival faction’s stand that imperialism is indirectly ruling through the big bourgeoisie and landlords. Whatever the effort, the naxalites are caught in the trap of the ‘compradore bourgeoisie’ from which they find so salvation!

The CPI(M) has pointed out at the very outset that the naxalite version of the programme “leads to left sectarian and adventurist errors, and overestimation of the situation. What is the implication of a stooge government in a period when imperialist is collapsing all over the world? It implies that the state and government is already completely isolated, universally hated and armed struggle is the only from left to the people; it has only to be called for to be started. This formulation ignores the existing class realities underestimates the ideological and organizational hold of the ruling classes and their parties on the people the illusions nurtured and undermines the preparations for the requisite class alignment for building the People’s Democratic Front.” (*On Left Deviation: Resolution of the Central Committee, CPI(M), August, 1967, p.5*)

Who is the main enemy of the Indian revolution? Here the villain in the form of the Three World Theory has further confused the

naxalites. While some staunchly maintain that the Soviet social imperialists are the main enemy, others vehemently disagree and put forward the alternative theories that 'both imperialist powers are joint enemies; feudalism is the main enemy; the imperialist-backed big bourgeoisie and landlords are the main enemy and so on and so forth. D V Rao commenting on these group states: "Even while claiming revolutionaries some are unable to see the difference between the two superpower and he upper hand off the Soviet Union. As a result whenever the Soviet Union is exposed, they call such an attitude pro-US." (DV Rao: "People's Democratic Revolution in India, forward, p.24). The same difference in perception of the Soviet Union as the main enemy divides the otherwise pro-Charu Vinod Mishra and CRC groups.

This difference in perception of the main enemy creates insuperable problems for them to agree on a common united front strategy of the classes in the revolution. The S N Singh group, Vinod Mishra group and the anti-Charu Andhra groups (Pulla Reddy and D V Rao groups) pivot their strategic class front on fighting "Soviet social imperialism" which is claimed to be the dominant imperialist power having a stranglehold on the Indian state and economy. This programmatic position is rejected by other groups which see this as the basis for class collaboration with the pro-US section of the ruling classes. While both sides maintain that the Indian ruling classes (compradore bourgeois and feudals) are divided into two factions, being lackeys of either Soviet or US imperialism, they are also divided on the primacy of the former and the nature of strategic class fronts to be developed. In a perversion of Marxist analysis, all the groups subscribe to the position that there are four oppressor enemy classes to be overthrown to make the new democratic revolution –Soviet social imperialism,' US imperialism, compradore capital and feudalism. While united in their determination to deny the reality of an Indian national bourgeoisie led by the big bourgeoisie and its dual character, these groups have engendered further disintegration by forcing class analysis to fit into a mythical anti-communist 'social imperialism.'

### **Tactics-Hall Mark of Opportunism and Aiding Ruling Class Disruption**

Naxalite tactics had been characterized by a dogmatic and sole reliance on armed struggle in its first phases. This was based on the sectarian 'people's war thesis put forward by Lin Biao at the ninth

congress of the CPC. In India this brand of adventurism was interpreted by Charu Mazumdar to be the tactic of individual terrorism. After the debacle of this tactic in 1970-71 many groups split away condemning the 'annihilation theory'. However the pro-Charu groups have persisted in defending this revolutionary line' and continue to be practitioners of terrorism. The pro Lin Biao groups in West Bengal, the Vinod Mishra group in Bhojpur the People's War group in Andhra Pradesh and the Venu group in Kerala have all in some form or another continued to rely on the line of annihilation. The difference exists only in the emphasis. The CRC (Venu group) began talking of a 'revolutionary mass line in 1979, by which they mean that annihilation of any which enemy must be part of the mass struggle and resorted only which the masses of an area approve of it. Except for the extreme fringe of the pro-Lin Biao groups the other groups who uphold the Charu line currently talk of annihilation of the class enemy as an extension of the mass line.

Though many groups have denounced the past practices as wrong, the condemnation has stemmed more from the failure of the tactic rather than any honest self-introspection as to its anti-Marxist character. Even those who renounce it as anti-Marxist, still cling to the theory of permanent armed struggle'. The OCCR led by Kannu Sanyal states: "the terrorism pursued by the struggles against revisionism. That is, the new process of forming a Marxist-Leninist party which was set in motion after the Naxalite uprising of 1967 was again nipped in the bud and communist revolutionaries were split up into various groups." (Voice of Naxalbari July 1982). However, the OCCR has no clear programme or tactics to break with this old adventurism. All that has been modified is that mass work must be combined or lead to armed struggle. By the debacle of individual annihilation all the naxalite groups have had to abandon their original tactical position that work in mass organisation is reformist and the trade union movement means economism. Self-criticism by the group is, however, combined with the contradictory chant about the 'revolutionary situation' obtaining in the country. The subjective assessment that India is on the brink of revolution and the corollary that the Indian ruling classes are totally isolated continues to be sanctified dogma.

### **Participation in Election**

All naxalite groups at the inception had vehemently denounced the CPI(M) for participating in parliament and elections. Boycott of the

parliament was the *sine qua non* of naxalism. However, the retreat from this aspect of petty bourgeois revolutionism has led to acrimonious divisions among the naxalites.

Condemning this infantile-left position, the party had state: 'Using parliamentary institutions, according to them, is remaining bogged down at the level of mass consciousness. The added argument is that parliaments are obsolete and hence participation is no good. Thus in the name of a revolutionary struggle this important form is rejected in principle. This is nothing but an anarchist deviation, which underestimates the fight against the state in the concrete. This has nothing to do with Leninism. It seeks to reduce the working class and the masses to impotent spectators in the elections; bypasses the stage of their consciousness; advances slogans which delink the party from vast sections particularly in the election and hands them over to the tender mercies of the Congress and the other bourgeois parties.' (On Left Deviation p. 10)

The first group to violate this 'revolutionary boycott' was the S N Singh-Pulla Reddy-led which contested the assembly elections in June, 1977. since then, even after they spilt up they have continued to participate in elections both to the parliament and state assemblies. In this they were joined by the OCCR and the DV Rao group. This plunge into bourgeois election has led to the worst abuse heaped upon them by the CRC group the, People's War faction and the Saraf group. The CRC is convinced that the other major pro-Charu group led by Vinod Mishra is also preparing to join the 'pigsty' of parliament. The V M group in its party congress in 1983 had cleared the way for such an eventuality. This was confirmed with the Vinod Mishra group led IPF putting up a large number of candidates in Bihar in the recent assembly elections.

Refusing to accept the use of the bourgeois parliamentary system as it could negate their 'revolutionary situation', the strategic boycottists such as Saraf vainly assert, "the prospect for the compradore parliamentary system is one of confusion uncertainty, one crisis followed by another, ultimately leading to the proletarian revolution." (Saraf: Current national and international situation; A Revolutionary View Point, July-Sep. 1978,p. 64)

If the boycottists' continuous calls for boycott have gone unheeded by the people the participationists electoral tactics have been just as

disruptive. For instance the SNS-led group has not hesitated to support the worst communal and reactionary forces including BJP-RSS candidates in many states in the name of defeating the pro-social imperialist parties, which by definition include the left parties. In West Bengal they allied with forces like the Jharkhand Party and Mukti Morcha to fight Left Front candidates in the assembly polls.

When the majority of groups not averse to participation in elections at different levels, the naxalite stance of fighting revisionism by abjuring parliament has been given a quiet burial.

### **Mass Work And Mass Organisations**

On the abandoning of mass organizations by naxalite the CPI(M) had joined out: "Thus neglecting the main task of building mass organizations by refusing to fight for every little relief for the workers and peasants by not paying serious attention to the immediate demands and to simultaneously raising political consciousness, by a mere reliance on organizations of force once more leads to a band of select individuals indulging in militant actions, under the pretext of defending or revolutionising the struggles and bringing disaster to the mass movement." (*On Left Deviation*, p. 12)

The S N Singh-Pulla Reddy CPI(ML) were the first to float the IFTU to organize trade union work. But the other naxalite groups kept away from this set-up as it was led by 'neo-revisionists' and 'liquidationists'. The Andhra groups outside the CPI(ML) mainstream had never theoretically denounced work in mass organizations. They, along with those who have now joined the bandwagon of mass work', conceive of work and tactics in the mass organisations in an extremely disruptive fashion which helps the ruling classes. One favourite tactic is to raise immediate burning issue and organize protests and then launch a confrontation with the landlord, police, and capitalists without taking into account the correlation of forces and the consequences of such actions. Prematurely inviting police and enemy class attacks leads to crushing of the movement and disorganising the people completely.

In Bhojpur district in 1975-76, such tactics led to severe repression and decimation of struggling peasants. In Andhra the debacle of

Srikakulam has been repeated on a minor scale in various places which leaves these areas firmly under landlord/police domination. In Wynad, in 1981 the 'annihilation' of a 'class enemy' led to repression. The CRC group which boasts of this action states: "The guerilla action here was done really as the exercise of the people's political will after mobilizing and consolidating it using the method 'from the people, to the people'. Though the party was not completely smashed in the repression led those by the state, it could not effectively overcome the enemy's encirclement and suppression". (*Though a New Phase of Spring Thunder*, p. 154)

Given their adventurist political line, for the naxalite groups every trade union and mass struggle is seen as an onslaught against the state power and its agents; in the name of fighting economism, no compromise in struggle is possible-which leads to anarchism and disruption. The efforts to prettify these disruptionist tactics in the mass movement as 'building people's political power', mass line to defeat revisionism and so on cannot hide the basic truth that naxalite tactics today are geared to disorient mass movements, foil united struggles and isolate the Left forces.

The number of student, youth, peasant and cultural organizations, which have been floated by the various naxalite groups must be seen for what they are and combated with correct tactics among the people along with ideological exposure.

Having no correct class approach, most of these groups have failed to develop any mass base and only succeed in creating temporary disruptions in some pockets like tribal areas, though their mass organisational activities. They are unable to organise the basic classes with a correct political tactical line. Given their petty-bourgeois character, they are unable to do sustained hard work to build up united class organizations of workers and peasants. Therefore in the post-emergency period, many groups have concentrated on two spheres in their mass work-civil liberties and culture. For some of the naxalite groups, civil liberties organizations have become the mass front to conduct their partisan activities.

The history of the PUCL, which originated during the emergency, needs no recounting here. But its nature and composition is instructive-it has become a forum consisting of a specific group of political elements-naxalite sarvodayites of the Gandhi Peace

Foundation variety a sprinkling of pro-western liberals and some BJP-RSS activists. This is probably why the S N Singh-led CPI(ML) has made this forum its main front of activity as it tallies with their anti-Soviet, anti-fascist front line,. However, other naxalite have refused to subscribe to this concept of a civil liberties platform. So there are also civil liberties fronts floated by other naxalite groups, some together and some separately. The People Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) broke away from the PUCL. Apart from this there is the Association for Production of Democratic Rights run by naxalite in West Bengal and the Organization for the Protection of Democratic Right (OPDR) run by the DV Rao group in Andhra. The A P Civil Liberties committee is dominated by the People's War (Kondapalli groups). Such organizations also exist in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. This in the sphere of civil liberties also, the naxalites have their different tactics and different organization. All these organizations naturally show a marked preference for taking up cases of victimized naxalite and helping in their legal battles. They also specialize in taking up so-called violations of civil liberties by the Left Front governments of West Bengal and Tripura. In all civil liberties forums, the naxalite introduce their partisan politics of slandering the Left Fronts, thereby reducing the whole exercise to a mockery.

As for their excursions into culture, the main aim of the numerous cultural groups and squabs has so far been to propagate the politics of the various naxalite groups. However in 1983 a more ambitious effort was made when after a conference in Delhi an All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) was announced Cultural squads from the Vinod Mishra Pulla Reddy and People's War groups participated. The AILRC's declared aim is to fight, amongst other things revisionist culture and the social imperialist danger. This attempt to project a 'revolutionary culture' has been scoffed at by the CRC Saraf groups who do not believe any such front is possible without clinching political differences.

### **Naxalite Version of Fascism**

Another curious aspect of their tactical slogans is the insistence of the fallacious belief that Congress rule represents fascism, and raising slogans on this basis. The S N Singh group has been the loudest in denouncing 'Indira fascism' propped up by Soviet 'social imperialism'. At the other end of the ideological spectrum, the CRC (Venu group) is also very liberal with the use of the term to describe

Indian conditions. In fact it termed the assassination of Mrs Gandhi as the death of a fascist'. It sees every move of the Congress (I) government as a move to impose fascism and calls for resisting fascism. It is a very peculiar form of fascism in India indeed which allows revolutionaries of the SNS group to maintain legal offices and participate in elections; that enables the leaders of the CRC groups to come out on bail and conduct vigorous anti-fascist propaganda in the capital of the country by publishing a paper!

### **Stand on Nationalities Question**

One theoretical position which none of the groups have abandoned is the right to self-determination for the various nationalities in India. Programmatically they all extend support to secessionist movements as part of the new democratic revolution. Only in its application they sometimes differ. For the naxalite with the semi-colony and semi-feudal thesis the right of self-determination is to be exercised against a compradore state exploited by superpowers. By advocating this dangerous and erroneous stand, in practice most of the groups are supporting and participating in the movements led by the divisive forces bent upon breaking up the country and dividing the working people with the backing of US Imperialism. In no other current question as the national question is the treacherous and pro-imperialist character of naxalite seen.

In the case of both Assam and Punjab, various naxalite groups have declared support for the separatist movements and where possible are participating in them. With the exception of the SNS group, which had some reservations, naxalite groups have hailed the Assam chauvinist movement as a national movement. DV Rao opines: "To say that there is the invisible hand of the US behind the national movements going on in the state of the North-East is only to divert the real issue." He proceeds to exonerate the USA and targets the Soviet Union; "The United States, weakened as it is (is) contenting itself with the export of its capital... But as for the Soviet Union, it is attempting to grip not only the country as a whole, but all the strategic area within it. The North East is one among them." (D V Rao: *People's Democratic Revolution*, pp. 25-26). So flying in the face of all facts of US imperialist subversion in the North East, a theory is invented to project the Assam chauvinist movement as fighting Soviet domination!

On Punjab most groups categorically state that the extremists activities in Punjab are a fight 'national oppression'. "In the case of Punjab the situation has developed to the demand for national independence involving armed struggle against national oppressors." (*Mass Line, June, 1984*). This is how the CRC group gives the Bhindranwale groups the status of fighter for national liberation. Not to be left behind, the People's War group states: "if now leadership (of Akalis) betrays the movement for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib resolution demands half-way, it will be the proletariat who will be primarily to blame. From a bourgeois leadership we could not have expected otherwise... It is for the proletariat to take the movement forward, stick to the Anandpur Sahib resolution and other democratic demands expose the leadership, fight the fundamentalists ... and enhance the struggle against the center and the police." (*Vanguard, April-May, 1984*) As for as this group naxalites is concerned it is the proletariat which has to champion the Anandpur Sahib resolution! They also support the Akali stand on Article 25 of the constitution. Their only complaint is that some naxalites have joined the Bhindranwale gangs and merged their identity, instead of joining the movement independently.

The SNS-led CPI(ML) while inveighing against the chauvinist aspects of the Assam movement is not above combining with tribal separatism. SN Singh writes, "Is it not a matter of proletarian pride that our party has been struggling hard to rescue the separate Jharkhand movement from the opportunist this disruptive hands. With 'separate Jharkhand on the basis of adivasi -non-adivasi people's unity' as our slogan are we not preventing the careerists and opportunists from dividing the exploited people ... True to their colour some among the ultra-'left' fraternity can be found championing the chauvinist line of driving out all the non-adivasis from the Jharkhand region." (SN Singh: *For a New Democracy, March-April 1982*) While S N Singh himself states that they have joined the movement to rescue it from chauvinist elements, he also admits that those belonging to his 'ultra-left fraternity' are busy fanning the flames of tribal chauvinism. The difference in practices is only one of degree.

Various seminars are being organised by the different groups of naxalites to espouse dangerous stand on nationalities. A typical example is the seminar organised in August 1981 in madras by the A P Radical Studies Union where papers were presented supporting the 'national movements' of Assam, Nagaland, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand Vidharba Tamil Nadu.

It is in the matter of facing the challenge of the divisive forces that we see the naxalite at their disruptive worst today. Blinded to the threat of US imperialism by their hatred for the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, they are easy prey for recruitment into the imperialist-backed divisive movements, which can be covered with pseudo-revolution rhetoric about anti-centre national movements.

### **Imperialist Infiltration**

It is this dark side of imperialist infiltration into the naxalite movement that requires further highlighting. The recent episode of the vertical split in the S N Singh-led CPI(ML) have confirmed the facts already available. In mid-1984 the Provisional Central Committee led by S N Singh split down the middle with the Santosh Rana - Vaskar Nandy group and the faction led by S N Singh parting ways after a bitter inner quarrel. It is significant as the bankruptcy of naxalite politics once again surfaces sharply with mutual accusations of betrayal of Mao Zedong thought, softness to US imperialism and divisive movements being bandied about.

The S N Singh minority faction in its document makes serious charges against Vaskar Nandy and company. "In our organisation also, Nandy's close associates established contacts with a foreign voluntary agency and a native voluntary agency financed by Western monopoly capital, keeping it secret from the POC and the general secretary of the party, S N Singh. They established contact with Rural Aid Consortium of Tagore Society which is financed by West European countries and the USA and with one Danish Organisation on the Plea of providing relief to the people of Gobiballabpur in West Bengal and some areas in Bihar. Lakhs of rupees were received for digging tanks, constructing school building opening a sewing training center and distributing chickens and cattle to the needy. It also came to our notice that money was being received by some of our leaders from the Lutheran Church. When it came to light to the PCC members, an intense ideological struggle burst forth in the party on this issue." (Our differences with Nandy-Rana group, PCC-CPI(ML), p. 29)

It goes on to state: "We thoroughly investigated (among the cadres

and people) in Gobiballapur and Bhargora, where relief work was carried on through money from the "Tagore Society", Rohtas Channpatia and Mushhari, where schools were built up by the Dabes, and party and doubted our bonafides ... Several cadres have been exposed to these agencies." It concludes with the damning indictment: "It does not require intelligence of a high order to find out why some of the former members of the PCC adopted particular policies on the question of caste, tribe, Assamese and non-Assamese." Following a blind anti-Soviet line, Satyanarian Singh found out a few months before his death that the majority of his PCC members sided with Nandy and company in whitewashing its links with the imperialist funded voluntary agencies, most having been, corrupted with foreign money.

### **Attitude to the CPI(M)**

If there is one tenet has not been abandoned by any of the groups, it is their implacable hatred for the CPI(M). Most of the groups characterise the CPI(M) not only as revisionist party but also a party of the ruling classes- that section which is allied to Soviet Social imperialism. Though the phase of annihilating CPI(M) cadres has been abandoned as an official policy, with some exceptions as in Warrangal district the same aim of liquidating the CPI(M) is sought to be pursued by opportunity alliances with reactionary political forces and outright slander against the CPI(M) and the Left Front governments.

As an observer who was earlier not unsympathetic to their movement has noted, "Often the affirmation of the revolutionary identity of naxalism means singling out the CPM and CPI for an onslaught because, according to their theory, those parties can be nothing but obstacles to the popular movement ... the anti CPM and CPI aspect of naxalism is not new. The point is that it has become increasingly more important over the recent past as the naxalite survival has been threatened." (Praful Bidwai, "From Thunder to a Whimper", The Times of India January 11, 1983)

Unable to explain how the compradors in a semi colony are able to maintain a viable parliamentary regime, the common rationalization is to blame the 'revisionist' CPI(M). "The reason why this compradore Parliamentary system sustai9ned for 31 years, does not lie in its viability created illusions about the reactionary Indian

state.... adopted the parliamentary road.... blunted the edge of class struggle and prevented the growth of a genuine revolutionary party – thus helping the perpetuation of this rotten system for such period”. (Saraf, A Revolutionary view point, July-Sept, 1978, p.64)

The anti-Soviet /anti-Fascist theorists include the CPI(M) as one of the forces to be isolated, as according to them the party supports Soviet hegemonism and is therefore a lackey of the Congress party too. The newly formed IPF in the recent parliament elections conducted propaganda calling on people to defeat both the Congress(I) and the Left Front in West Bengal! Two naxalite groups in Tripura have openly allied with the separatist TUJS to fight the Left Front there. The only difference between the boycottists and participationsist in elections is that while those who boycott blame the ‘revisionist parties’ for giving a lease of life to the ‘decaying parliamentary system’, the participationsis consider that more effective propaganda can be made against the CPI(M) by intervening in the elections.

The hostility is but natural, for as Praful Bidwai points out: “This is one side of contemporary naxalism. The other side cynical and devious real politic; covert, and now increasingly overt collaboration with the most rabidly right wing politicians, class and casts, behind the scene maneuvers and collusion with the police and communal or regionalist parties.”

The experience of naxalism in the two Left-Front states of West Bengal and Tripura fully bear out this truth.

### **The Future of Ultra-Leftism-Potential for Disruption**

The disorganised and anarchic state of naxalism indicates that this variety of ultra leftism is doomed to extinction. Naxalism had arisen in the sixties in the background of petty-bourgeois frustrations at the deepening crisis of the bourgeois-landlord system and the left-sectarian line advocated by the CPC during the cultural revolution phase in China. With the elimination of the latter, the ideological steam for naxalism has petered out. However, the first factor has not disappeared. As Lenin pointed out, “A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism is characteristic of all countries. The instability of

such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasma, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another-all this is common knowledge. However at all rid revolutionary parties of old errors, which always crop up at unexpected occasion, in somewhat new forms, in a hitherto unfamiliar garb or surroundings, in an unusual-a more or less unusual-situation.” (Lenin, Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder, selected Works vol. III p. 358)

The horrors of capitalism and feudal remnants still plague Indian society and affect the vast petty-bourgeois sections. Ultra leftism finds fertile soil in such conditions. The farcical and at times agonizing disintegration of the naxalite ultra-left trend bears the potential for revival in other forms.

The struggle against the left-deviation which the CPI(M) waged alongside the fight against revisionism has scored major success. However, the Party has to continue to vigilantly note the continuing efforts to revive ultra-leftism and must effectively combat these trends in whichever garb they appear. The CPI(M) has been the only party which recognized the counter revolutionary content of naxalism and resolutely waged a political ideological battle without compromise. The current dead-end of naxalism is a vindication of its line.